

# Discount Flats

## Designing Flats for Automated Processing

# 301a

Quick Service  
Guide

**Related QSGs** [301, Physical Standards for Discount Flats](#)  
[330b, First-Class Mail Automation Flats](#)  
[340b, Standard Mail Automation Flats](#)  
[360, Bound Printed Matter Flats](#)  
[707g, Periodicals Automation Flats](#)

**Overview** Flat-size pieces meeting the applicable automation standards ([301.3](#)) are entitled to automation rates. Pieces that otherwise would be considered letter-size or parcels also may be designed for automated flats processing. This Quick Service Guide summarizes the dimensions and characteristics criteria for processing on automated flat sorting machine (AFSM) 100 or on upgraded flat sorting machine (UFSM) 1000. Size, weight, thickness, polywrap, and flexibility standards vary for the class of mail, as well as for the AFSM 100 and UFSM 1000. For eligibility and preparation standards for specific rate discounts, see the appropriate Quick Service Guide above.

**Physical Standards (301.3)** Shape: rectangular.  
Dimensions: see next page.  
Maximum weight:  
■ First-Class Mail: 13 ounces.  
■ Periodicals: 20 ounces for AFSM 100, 6 pounds for UFSM 1000.  
■ Standard Mail: less than 16 ounces.  
■ Bound Printed Matter: to qualify for barcode discount, pieces must meet the automation standards for AFSM 100, including a maximum weight of 20 ounces.  
Prohibitions: Clasps, strings, buttons, or other protrusions; also, staples, unless properly used as a binding method ([301.3.6](#)).  
Wrapping: Polywrapped, polybagged, and shrinkwrapped pieces are prohibited unless specifically approved. A list of approved polywrap and polywrap manufacturers is available on [ribbs.usps.gov](http://ribbs.usps.gov). Polywrapped pieces that meet the dimensions, flexibility, and rigidity standards for the AFSM 100 in [301.3.3](#) must meet all polywrap criteria in [301.3.5](#). Polywrapped pieces that do not meet the flexibility or rigidity standards in [301.3.3](#) but do meet the UFSM 1000 standards in [301.3.4](#) may be processed on the UFSM 1000. UFSM 1000 pieces may be prepared with polywrap that meets only property number 2, haze, in [Exhibit 301.3.5.1](#) (not required if address label is on the outside of polywrapped piece). Polywrapped pieces must be endorsed to show they are automation-compatible ([301.3.5.4](#)).  
Folded publications:  
■ For AFSM 100: a flat-size piece with a final fold must be designed so that the address is in view when the final folded edge is at the bottom and any intermediate bound or folded edge is to the right of the mailpiece.  
■ For UFSM 1000: a flat-size piece with a final fold must be designed so that the address is in view when the final folded edge is to the right and any intermediate bound or folded edge is at the bottom.  
■ Unbound newspapers and tabloids must be double-folded.  
Address: Each piece in an automation flat-size mailing must contain a complete delivery address ([602.1.4](#)).

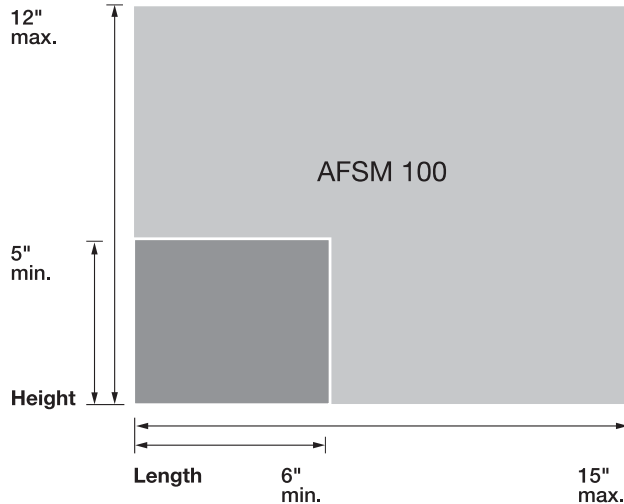
**Mailpiece Length and Height (301.3.2)** Length and height of an automation-compatible flat-size piece are determined by the following:  
■ For pieces prepared as a single sheet or in an envelope, full-length wrapper, or full-length sleeve, the length is the longest dimension. The height is the dimension perpendicular to the length.  
■ For a piece with a bound, folded, or closed edge (e.g., newspaper, tabloid, or catalog), the *length* is the dimension *parallel* to the folded or bound edge. The height (vertical dimension) is the dimension perpendicular to the bound, folded, or closed edge. If the piece is folded more than once or is bound and then folded, the length of the piece is based on the final fold.

**Barcodes (302.4)** Barcodes must be at least 1/8 inch from any edge of the address side (for UFSM 1000 pieces, at least 2 inches from the length, as defined above, is preferred).  
Address block barcodes must be in one of these four positions:  
■ Above the address line containing the recipient's name.  
■ Below the city, state, and ZIP Code line.  
■ Above or below the keyline information.  
■ Above or below the optional endorsement line.

**Flat-Size Booklet-Type Mailpieces (301.3.8.4)** The contents of the mailpiece prepared in sleeves or other wrappers must be sufficiently secure in the sleeve or wrapper to stay in place during processing. If material bearing the delivery information or barcode for the mailpiece is enclosed in a partial wrapper, that wrapper must be sufficiently secure to prevent the contents from shifting and obscuring the delivery address or barcode.

For the specific DMM standards applicable to this category of mail, consult the DMM sections referenced above and the general sections within each DMM module.

### Automated Flat Sorting Machine (AFSM) 100



**Length** Minimum: 6 inches  
Maximum: 15 inches

**Height** Minimum: 5 inches  
Maximum: 12 inches

**Thickness** Minimum: 0.009 inch  
Maximum: 3/4 inch

**Maximum Weight**

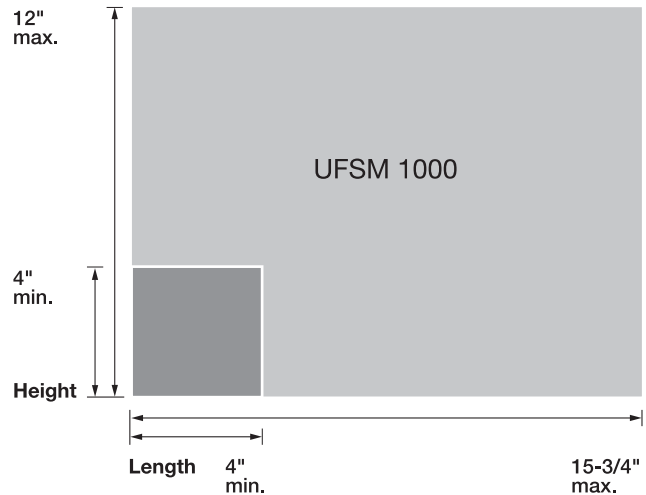
- First-Class Mail cannot weigh more than 13 ounces.
- Periodicals cannot weigh more than 20 ounces.
- Standard Mail must weigh less than 16 ounces.
- Bound Printed Matter cannot weigh more than 20 ounces.

**Flexibility** Must meet flexibility requirements in [301.3.3.4](#).

**Polywrapped Pieces** Must meet all eight properties in [Exhibit 301.3.5.1](#). If an address label is used on the outside of the polywrapped piece, the haze property is not required.  
Polywrap seam must be parallel to longest dimension.

**Mailpiece Identification** Polywrap marking: "USPS AFSM 100 Approved Polywrap" or "USPS 100 Approved Poly" (on address side, preferably below postage area).

### Upgraded Flat Sorting Machine (UFSM) 1000



Minimum: 4 inches  
Maximum: 15-3/4 inches

Minimum: 4 inches  
Maximum: 12 inches

Minimum: Pieces at least 4 inches but less than 5 inches long, greater than 1/4 inch thick. Pieces at least 5 inches long, 0.009 inch thick.  
Maximum: Pieces 13 inches long or less, 1-1/4 inches thick. Pieces longer than 13 inches up to and including 15-3/4 inches, 7/8 inch thick.

■ First-Class Mail cannot weigh more than 13 ounces.  
■ Periodicals cannot weigh more than 6 pounds.  
■ Standard Mail must weigh less than 16 ounces.  
■ Bound Printed Matter must meet the criteria for the AFSM 100.

No requirement.

Must meet property number 2, haze, in [Exhibit 301.3.5.1](#) (not required if address label is on the outside of polywrapped piece).

Polywrap marking: "USPS UFSM 1000 Approved Polywrap" or "USPS 1000 Approved Poly" (on address side, preferably below postage area).